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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

NI, SUHAN

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2646

DATE MAILED: 03/09/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/804,982

Applicant(s)

FRITZ ET AL.

Examiner

Suhan Ni

Art Unit

2646

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 December 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 and 42-44 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 15-40 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 and 43 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 10-14, 42 and 44 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>12/27/2005</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 2646

DETAILED ACTION

1. The Art Unit location of your application in the PTO has changed. To aid in correlating any papers for this application, all further correspondence regarding this application should be directed to Group **Art Unit 2646**.
2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission for RCE filed on 12/27/2005 has been entered.
3. This communication is responsive to the amendment filed on 12/27/2005.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 C.F.R.1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

4. Claims 1-14 and 42-43 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-10 of U. S. Patent No. 5,881,159. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claims 1-10 of U. S. Patent No. 5,881,159 are similar in scope to claim 1-14 and 41-42 of this application with obvious wording variations.

5. Claims 1-14 and 42-43 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-14 of U. S. Patent No. 6,473,511. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claims 1-14 of U. S. Patent No. 6,473,511 are similar in scope to claim 1-14 and 41-42 of this application with obvious wording variations.

Drawings

6. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the limitation of “**a behind-the-ear type hearing aid**” must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing

should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled “Replacement Sheet” in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) The invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) The invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

7. Claims 10 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Arndt (U.S. Pat. - 5,357,576).

Regarding claim 10, Arndt discloses a hearing aid (64) having a shell (66a) enclosing one or more hearing aid components (44, 46, 48), the shell being a substantially translucent (col. 4, line 54-56).

Regarding claim 14, Arndt further discloses the hearing aid, wherein the hearing aid is insertable into an ear canal (Fig. 4).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claim 11-13 and 42, 44 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Arndt (U.S. Pat. - 5,357,576).

Regarding claims 11-12 and 44, Arndt does not clearly teach all the details of tinting shell the same color as hearing aid components as claimed. Arndt does clearly suggests to make the shell as a skin colored material for minimizing its visibility (col. 4, lines 55-56), and providing a suitable color for tinting the shell of a hearing aid is very well known in the art, it therefore would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to be motivated to provide a suitable color for tinting the shell and component, such as a control device on the faceplate for the hearing aid, in order to make the hearing aid less noticeable when in used by a user.

Regarding claim 13, Arndt does not clearly teach a BTE type hearing aid as claimed. Since providing a suitable type hearing aid, such as a BTE type hearing aid is very well known in the art, it therefore would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to be motivated to provide the shell taught by Arndt for a suitable type hearing aid, in order to provide hearing aid for different user's need.

Regarding claim 42, Arndt does not clearly teach all the details of tinting many part of the hearing aid as claimed. Since providing a suitable color for tinting component of a hearing

aid is very well known in the art, it therefore would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to be motivated to provide a suitable color for tinting component, such as a control device on the faceplate for the hearing aid, in order to make the hearing aid less noticeable when in used by a user.

Allowable Subject Matter

9. Claims 1-9 and 43 are allowed.

Response to Amendment

10. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion


11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.
12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Suhan Ni** whose telephone number is **(571)-272-7505**, and the number for fax machine is **(571)-273-7505**. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm. If it is necessary, the examiner's supervisor, **Sinh N. Tran**, can be reached at **(571)-272-7564**.
13. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (**PAIR**) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR

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system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov/>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

14. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the group receptionist whose telephone number is (571)-272-2600, or please see <http://www.uspto.gov/web/info/2600>.

March 5, 2006


SUHAN NI
PRIMARY EXAMINER